



HAPPY 70TH ANNIVERSARY! Highland Parks & Recreation is celebrating 70 years. The department is featuring a new logo — created by park employee Cole Linkiewicz — in promotions and staff swag to commemorate the milestone.

GAZEBOEXPRESS

YOUR LOCAL SOURCE FOR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENTS FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • FEBRUARY 2017

BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

Redevelopment Commission, Highland Town Council to revisit plans for property around Town Theatre

Hours after the Town Council nixed the use of property tax funding to restore the Town Theatre, Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro was looking at next steps.

“Council President Dan Vassar said he wants the Redevelopment Commission and the Town Council to proceed with redevelopment activities in that area,” Petro said. “The commission will continue to assemble as much property as we can in the development area.

“We own the theatre, two buildings to the north and one to the south. We will continue to talk to developers to create a mixed-use development that enhances the downtown.”

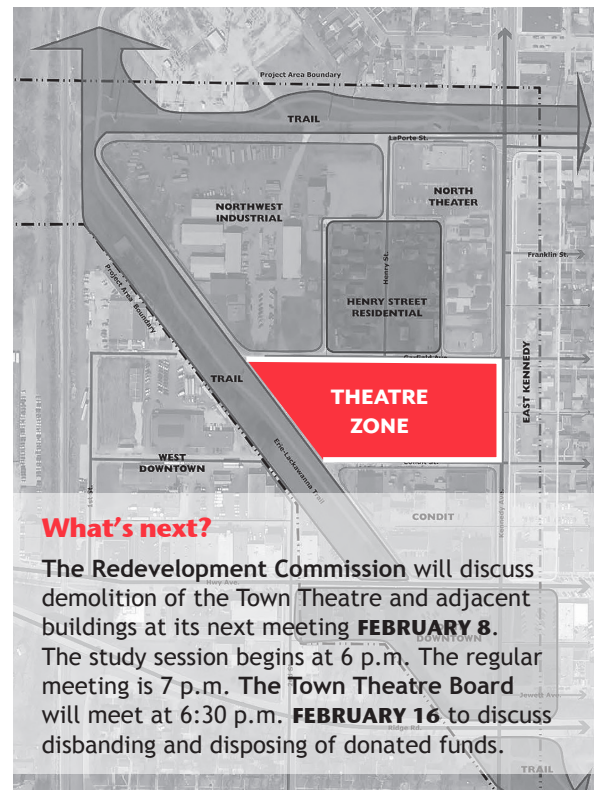
Vassar, who made an 11th-hour plea to allow the project to go forward,

said the eventual use of the properties west of Kennedy will significantly impact the future of downtown.

The 2016 Kennedy Avenue Corridor Plan addressed possible development scenarios on the 42 acres bordered by Kennedy Avenue, Ridge Road, LaPorte Avenue and the bike path.

The plan calls for a mix of residential, commercial, office and institutional uses that increase walkability, visibility and commercial viability while maximizing one of the last retail areas in the downtown.

“Public funding of a hub for an arts and cultural district was something a majority of the council could not support,” he said. “That area is in desperate need of development. We need to work together to make it happen.”



What's next?

The Redevelopment Commission will discuss demolition of the Town Theatre and adjacent buildings at its next meeting **FEBRUARY 8**. The study session begins at 6 p.m. The regular meeting is 7 p.m. The Town Theatre Board will meet at 6:30 p.m. **FEBRUARY 16** to discuss disbanding and disposing of donated funds.

SOURCE: This map is one of several concepts proposed in the 2016 Kennedy Avenue Corridor Plan. Learn more at highland.in.gov/HighlandTownTheatre.



1946

The mom-and-pop theatre opens to a full house of families. Decades later, the theatre offers foreign and independent films as well as cake and coffee during intermission.

2008

After 62 years, illness forces the Janowskis to close the movie house. The Hammond family's plans to reopen the popular venue never materialize.

2013 - 2014

Highland acquires the iconic theatre through a county tax sale. Town leaders assess the building, laying the groundwork to renovate and reopen the theatre.

2015

Highland Main Street digs deep for volunteers, raising funds for the project. Architects get busy on the first round of plans, debating the merits of renovating vs. new.

2016

A Creating Livable Communities' Grant aims to develop the Kennedy Avenue corridor, paving the way for an Arts & Cultural District with the theatre as its hub.

2017

A divided council rejects a final proposal to renovate the historic theatre, which faces an uncertain future. The building could be demolished to make way for private investment.

FAMILY BENEFIT

Katie Hofkamp is battling end-stage kidney disease and heart failure. She is only 35 years old. Today, friends of the Hofkamp family are asking for the community's help. Please join us for a benefit to offset healthcare expenses.

WHEN: 5 p.m. February 24

WHERE: Silver Buckle Saloon, 8355 Indianapolis Boulevard, Highland

DONATION: \$5 for food/entertainment

INFO: Visit the Hofkamp Family Benefit page on Facebook.

CHORUS AUDITIONS

Northwest Indiana Youth Chorus invites singers aged 6-18 to audition by appointment. NIYC rehearses Monday evenings at Lincoln Center in preparation for two concerts, one in December and one in May. The chorus also participates in local festivals, musical theatre and liturgical activities.

INFO: For more info or to schedule an audition, contact Dr. Bonita Neff at (219) 629-5448 or bdniff@iun.edu.



WARD 1

BERNIE ZEMEN
bzemen@comcast.net
(219) 781-1056



WARD 2

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WARD 3

DAN VASSAR - president
dvassar@highland.in.gov
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WARD 4

STEVEN WAGNER - v. president
swagner@highland.in.gov
(219) 718-3199



WARD 5

KONNIE KUIPER
kkuiper@highland.in.gov
(219) 924-7820

NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

Send your suggestions to:
gazeboexpress@theideafactory.us.com

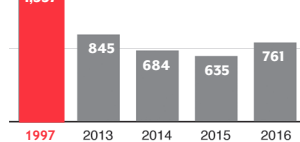
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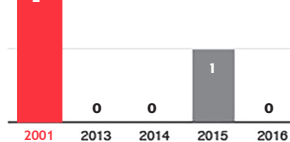
2016 CRIME STATISTICS

Highland police utilized every tool in their crime-fighting arsenal to keep the town and its residents safe in 2016. Violent crime was down while property crimes were up slightly over 2015. Here's a look at criminal activity over the last four years and how it compares to the highest recorded statistics in each category.

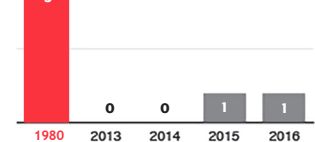
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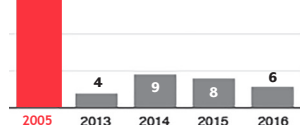
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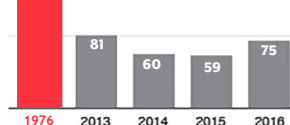
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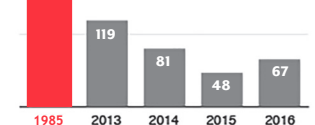
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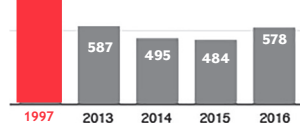
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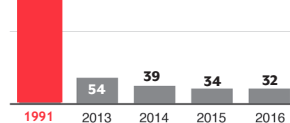
BURGLARY



LARCENY



VEHICLE THEFT



The Federal Bureau of Investigation collects Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) from agencies across the United States. Highland participates monthly in the data collection.

VIGILANT POLICE OFFICERS, CITIZENS KEEP OUR CRIMINAL ACTIVITY IN CHECK

The Federal Bureau of Investigation reported soaring violent crime in surrounding regions, but not in Highland.

Crime statistics for 2016 show the town bucked the national trend, reporting no homicides and one rape for the year.

Police Chief Pete Hojnicky said he and his officers look at crime trends year-over-year and relative to historic highs as they search for new ways to thwart criminals.

"It's encouraging to see how crime plummeted in 2016 from our highest recorded statistics in many categories.

In some cases, crime dropped by as much as 50 percent since its all-time high," he said.

"We couldn't do it without the dedication of the sworn, civilian and volunteer members of the department."

Hojnicky said a vital asset in fighting crime are the residents, who make it their business to be aware when something is amiss in their neighborhoods.

"Our citizen participation is critical," he said. "We encourage everyone to call 911 to report any suspicious behavior and to remain alert to criminal activity."

CLERK-TREASURER NAMED NIRPC CHAIRMAN

Congratulations to Clerk-Treasurer Michael Griffin, who will serve as Chairman of the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission this year.

High praise from his colleagues on the Town Council as well as those who serve with him on the regional planning authority followed on the heels of the announcement.

"Michael Griffin is a devoted public servant," NIRPC Vice Chair Geof Benson said. "His knowledge of public finance and government are a tremendous asset."

Town Council President Dan Vassar considers Griffin one of the best public finance officials in the state.

"We are lucky to have Michael on our team, working for the residents of Highland," Vassar said. "Our region is better because of the knowledge and wisdom he shares with the NIRPC board."

In addition to sharing his public finance acumen, Benson said Griffin shares his word of the day, which, "... helps us widen our vocabulary. He is a great role model."



Lincoln Community Fitness Center

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Meet Jen Gregory: a group-fitness-student-turn-teacher, who didn't get the bug until she saw the parks class schedule and took the plunge.

Four years after her first Team Total Fitness class, Gregory remains a regular at the Tuesday and Thursday evening workout sessions — a challenging mix of cardio, step and toning — as well as Fitness 101, a class she created and teaches.

"We were thrilled when Jen started taking classes," Recreation Director Dave Byers said. "When she came to us about a new fitness offering, we were just as excited. Fitness 101 is a group class that is ideal for those new to the world of exercise and fitness."

Gregory's class is geared toward not only beginners, but those who have special needs or mobility issues

"We modify the class for individual students who have issues, such as knee pain, carpal tunnel syndrome and vertigo," she said. "Our goal is to make exercise available to everyone."

FITNESS 101

We'll work on strength, cardio, balance, and flexibility, at a manageable pace for your fitness level. All equipment is provided.

WHEN: 8-8:55 p.m.

Tuesdays and Thursdays
Jan. 31 through Feb. 23 and
Feb. 28 through March 23

WHERE: Lincoln Center

FEE: \$39/\$43 or \$9/\$10
drop-in session.

INFORMATION

For more information about this class and others, visit highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114

TIME TO REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN

The public elementary schools will hold kindergarten registration the week of March 13. Parents are urged to bring their children and the items listed below to the school that serves their immediate district according to the following schedule:

8:45 – 11 AM:

Last names "A" through "M"

12:15 – 2:30 PM:

Last names "N" through "Z"

MONDAY, MARCH 13

Merkley Elementary School
9340 Fifth St. • (219) 922-5640

TUESDAY, MARCH 14

Warren Elementary School
2901 100th St. • (219) 922-5660

THURSDAY, MARCH 16

Southridge Elementary School
9221 Johnston St. • (219) 922-5650

FRIDAY, MARCH 17

Johnston Elementary School
8220 Fifth St. • (219) 923-2428

AGE REQUIREMENT: Students must be 5 years of age on or before Aug. 1, 2017.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR REGISTRATION:

1. Five proofs of residency

Two of the following:

NIPSCO, water, phone, cable (utility bills/deposit receipts)

Two of the following: Driver's license/state ID showing current address, vehicle registration, recent paycheck/unemployment check receipt.

One of the following: Lease and rent receipt, mortgage and homeowners insurance documents, notarized letter with three proofs of residency from the homeowner (parent/guardian must provide ID listed above)

2. Proof of custody, if applicable

3. Birth certificate

4. Social security number

5. Current immunization records (name and phone number of pediatrician)

CALLING ALL POETS! HIGHLAND SEEKS NEXT POET LAUREATE

Whether it's a love of sonnets or alliteration in the written word; if poetry is your love, Highland Main Street is looking for you.

A year after Lily Rex became the first poet laureate, the hunt is on for her successor.

"Having the Town Council's support in making poetry a more important part of Highland has been great," Rex said.

From "No One Knows Why They Call it Frog Hollow," to the Good Beer Bad Poetry event, Rex loved advancing poetry in Highland.

This position is open to any poet who is, or has been, a Highland resident.

As a public voice of our community, the poet laureate serves as an ambassador for the arts and appears at public events.

NOMINATIONS

Nominations are due March 15. Details about the program and the application process are available at town hall or online at highland.in.gov.

QUESTIONS? Call (219) 972-7598 or email lryskamp@highland.in.gov.

KIDDIE TREAT DECORATING

Kids — ages 5 to 15 — create a variety of sweet treats with Cathy of Cookiecious Bakery. All supplies are included.

WHEN: 5 to 6 p.m. **FEB. 7** (Valentine's cake pops) and **MARCH 14** (Lucky rainbow treats)

FEE+: \$15 residents / \$18 nonresidents

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114

BABE RUTH & TRAVEL LEAGUE

It's time to register for the new Highland Babe Ruth and Travel League for the following divisions: Babe Ruth and Senior League.

BABE RUTH: Ages 13 to 15

SENIOR LEAGUE: Ages 16 to 19

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. **FEB. 11** and **25**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

NOTE: Players MUST turn 13 by April 30, 2017 or 19 after December 31, 2016 and reside in Lake County. Birth certificate and proof of residency are required at registration.

INFO: Call President Dan Vassar at (219) 924-1945 or e-mail highlandbaberuth@yahoo.com.

HIGHLAND LITTLE LEAGUE

Boys and girls can register now for the following Little League divisions: T-Ball, Rookie, Minor B, Minor A, Majors.

LEAGUE AGES: 4 to 12

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **FEB. 18** and **MARCH 4**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

NOTE: Players MUST turn 4 by August 31, 2016 and reside or go to school in Highland. Birth certificate and proof of residency are required.

REGISTRATION: Forms online at highlandll.com.

INFO: Call HLL President Bob Johnsen at (219) 718-1236 or email info@highlandll.com.

HIGHLAND GIRLS SOFTBALL

Spring and summer sports seasons are just a few short months away and sign-ups are scheduled for the following age divisions: 8U, 10U, 12U, 14U and 18U.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **FEB. 18** and

from 6 to 8 p.m. **MARCH 1**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

REGISTRATION FEE: \$70 includes yard sign, team shirt, shorts, socks and tournament shirt. \$20 raffle fee reimbursed by selling tickets.

NOTE: All equipment is provided by the league except for a required glove. Rubber spikes are recommended, but not required.

INFO: Visit highlandgirlssoftball.org.

ADULT SOFTBALL REGISTRATION

Registration begins this month for men's and co-rec summer softball. Single-game divisions begin April 18 and double-header divisions begin May 7. Rosters are limited to 20 players.

TEAM FEE: \$700 due by **MARCH 31**

MEETING: 6 p.m. **APRIL 5**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114

Community Garage Sale

Do you have items you would like to resell, but don't want to invite people into your home to show your products? Rent a booth space at one of Highland Parks & Recreation's garage sales. Roger Parker from P & P Collectibles will promote his Card & Comic Show in conjunction with the garage sale.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, **MARCH 11**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

VENDOR FEES: A 10' x 10' interior space is \$32.10. A 23' x 6' wall space is \$53.50. Booth space selection is first come, first served.

RESERVATIONS: Must be made at Park Office, 2450 Lincoln St.

INFO: Call (219) 838-0114.



MIDDLE SCHOOL BASKETBALL

Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade residents of Highland or students attending a Highland school are invited to participate in the Middle School Basketball League. League format will be determined by registration numbers. Everyone receives a team T-shirt. The first-place team receives champion T-shirts. Teams will be chosen through a player draft with the coaches.

WHEN: Wednesday nights, **APRIL 5 - JUNE 7**

PRACTICE BEGINS: Week nights

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$50 resident / \$55 nonresident

REGISTRATION: Deadline is **MARCH 1**

ONLINE ACTIVITY CODE: 133002

NOTE: There will be a Mandatory Skills Assessment from 6:45 to 8 p.m. **MARCH 2** in the Lincoln Community Center Field House.

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

Highland students are invited to participate in the High School Basketball League. League format will be determined by registration numbers. Everyone receives a team T-shirt. The first place team will receive champion T-shirts.

Participants will sign up as individuals and teams will be chosen through a player draft with the coaches.

WHEN: Wednesday nights, **APRIL 5 - JUNE 7**

WHERE: Lincoln Community Center

FEE: \$50 resident / \$55 nonresident

REGISTRATION: Deadline is **MARCH 7**

ONLINE ACTIVITY CODE: 133003

NOTE: There will be a Mandatory Skills Assessment from 6:45 to 8 p.m. **MARCH 8** in the Lincoln Community Center Field House.

INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114